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Brothers look to their sisters to supply them with wakus for their daughters to marry. A waku's importance to a man is no less than that of a son. A brother always makes presents to his sister for her son, as well as to her husband.

A brother, but no sister, may eat a youth's kill of kangaroo, emu, et cetera, until the youth's wife has had a child. A sister is supposed to help carry the ruddled bones of the first kangaroo or emu killed by her brother, just as she helps carry her dead brother's bones.

A brother and father always know and keep the tabooed names of a girl. No woman knows her ceremonial name.

There are two sets of behavior in the relationship of a brother and sister that must be treated together (see pages 110-112 for an interpretation of the Wakinu and Mirriri customs). First, she is called wakinu by all her brothers. In its primary sense, wakinu means a person without kin, and secondarily "worthless" or, more expressively, "rubbish." Bamapama, the trickster hero, a much-loved scoundrel who lived in the olden days and broke all laws, is always wakinu after some particularly fantastic escapade of his has been retold. Wakinu is used during a fight as an appropriate term against one's enemies. Secondly, no brother can hear his sister sworn at or hear obscene speech in her presence, such as is very common otherwise. Ordinarily, when a man's anger rises, he immediately bursts into an almost pyrotechnical display of abuse, most of it centering around sex, breaking of incest taboos, peculiarities of the genitalia, irregularities in the sexual act between men and women, et cetera. The aversion to hearing or using such profanity in front of a sister is called "mirriri" (ear-thing). It really means, "My ear can't hear obscenity in front of my sister." An older man said, "It is just the same as if I had been hit on the head with a club when I hear that." Another said, "My heart jumps and stops, jumps and stops, when I hear that mirriri."

Malambunu had come home and found his food unprepared by his wife, Dangra. A quarrel resulted in which he called her matamakmi (incestuous). She did not swear at him. A near-clan brother of Dangra, Badunga, heard the swearing and became very angry. He gathered a bundle of spears, hooked them one by one to his spear-thrower, and threw them at a large number of the women in the native camp, including Dangra. An investigation showed that every one of the women at whom he threw was called yeppa by him.

Balli, an adolescent girl, called her own mother dalardumaru (big vagina).

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Natjurili, a near-clan brother of the mother, heard the girl use this term. He, too, threw spears at all his sisters, tribal and blood. 602 578

A general camp fight was on; Dimala, who wanted the combatants to stop, cried, "Stop swearing at each other. If you don't stop calling each other names, I'll have to go throw spears at all my sisters." 196

If Malambunu had sworn at Badunga's near brother as he had at Badunga's sister, there would have been a quarrel and possible fight; such swearing between men, however, only happens when there is already a fight on. If Balli had sworn at Natjurili's mother or daughter, he would have done nothing.[7]

The person who swears most frequently at a man's sister is her husband, especially in a connubial quarrel. The husband is ego's dué, with whom he has one of the strongest relationships. 593 578 605

Yeppa ⟷ *Yeppa* (sister ⟷ sister)

There are the following varieties of this relationship: (1) sisters from the same father and mother and having the same husband; (2) sisters from the same father and mother but having different husbands; (3) sisters having the same husband but different fathers and mothers; (4) wives of brothers of one clan; (5) near-clan sisters; and (6) distant-clan sisters. 593 602

There are no taboos between sisters. Younger sisters are disciplined and protected by the older ones. The older ones also teach the younger ones how to make baskets, earn their living, and do the things they should as members of Murngin culture.

Bapa ⟷ *Gatu* (father ⟷ child)

There are five varieties of this relationship, in the following order of importance: (1) the blood father; (2) his brothers; (3) fathers more remote than the first two, but in the same clan; (4) fathers from nearby clans; and (5) fathers from remote clans.

A definite distinction is made between actual father and father's brothers, blood sons and brothers' sons; between father's own brothers and clan brothers of the father. Clan solidarity sharply divides fathers within and outside of the clan. There may or may not be a difference in the emotional attitude of a father and son from a nearby clan and a father and son from a more distant clan. The usual behavior between father and son generally does not hold between a distant son and

[7] There is some evidence that the father is also supposed to participate in the mirriri, but this feeling must be very weak since no concrete evidence was collected and it was spoken of but once by a Murngin man, and then only in passing.

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628 "All right," he said, "I am satisfied. My brother was no good, and I cannot be angry."

The four men came up for him to spear the man who had done the killing. "No," said Warlumbopo, "I don't want to spear your leg. I am through." (He did not want to take this action which is symbolical of finishing a feud, so that he could kill the man at a later date.)

"No," said the man, "you spear my leg."

Warlumbopo took his spear head and just broke the skin of his enemy. He wanted the latter to think that it did not mean very much to him, but inwardly it signified that he intended to kill him later.

They all went back to camp. He slept there with them that night. The Marderpa men watched him, for they believed he might be pretending and they were too wise not to know that all the people in the north resort to trickery whenever it is possible. Warlumbopo remained quiet. He stayed there for over a week and did nothing. He carried only one spear to keep suspicion down. It was a big red stone spear. He put a longer shaft to it. The fact that he carried only one spear served partially to quiet the suspicions of his enemies, for ordinarily when there is trouble a man carries a large bundle of them.

One night when it was dark he slept nearer the main camp. The camp dogs came in from their places in the surrounding bush. They were nosing about the refuse while they hunted for turtle bones. Two dogs became engaged in a noisy fight over a bone. One of them was Warlumbopo's. While they were howling he picked up his spear and started calling the dog's name, "Latera!" (also the name of the stones around his clan well), and running toward the dogs, which brought him to the side of the old man who had killed his brother. The old Marderpa was awakened by the noise and raised up on his elbow. As he did this, Warlumbopo shoved his spear downward into the man's gullet. He started running again, calling for his dog as he went across to the mainland on the sand bank that connects the island with it during low tide. When he was out of the firelight's glow in the darkness of the surrounding bush he stopped and called back to the
● [195] Marderpa, "You people do not know what is at the bottom of new spring water."[6]

Warlumbopo went back into the bush to the camp of his dead brother. The body had swollen. It was very large. The wives of the dead man were still there. He dug a hole and rolled the body into it, covered it, and went back to his Ritarngo country with the wives. When he arrived home he

[6] This cryptic, rather epigrammatic remark, with a touch of sardonic humor about it, very typical of Murngin thought, refers to the fact that every year, after the long wet season is past and the flood waters have gone, new fresh-water springs are found and it is always a matter of speculation from where they come. Warlumbopo had likened himself to a spring and the cause of his arrival in the Marderpa camp to the underground source of a spring's water supply.

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speak to the mother of so-and-so.' He may also get round the prohibition by using relationship terms or addressing his remarks to a third person.

Nomads have no equivalents to our courtesy phrases 'please' and 'thank you' but make use of a highly developed form of praise. They couch their requests in courteous flattery. A Yulengor who is preserving some highly prized spear-heads may be reluctant to part with them, but if a man says to him, 'Ga, bokor-julni' ('Give to me, your face is smiling, pleasant and good'), he will almost certainly hand over the goods. Again, a man stretching out his hand to a relative for some rare food will probably say: 'Ga, kong-julni' ('Give to me, your hand is kind and generous').

Other forms of speech are used more often between closely related nomads, as when a child says to its mother: 'Ga, bokor-ngati' ('Give to me, your face is like my grandfather's'). Brothers, sisters and cousins say to each other: 'Ga, bokor-bapa' ('Give to me, your face is like your father's'). Sometimes they employ the idiom: 'Rhumbul durung unnera' ('Body and flesh like your father'), though more frequently this is addressed to a corpse in mourning ceremonies.

For years I was at a loss to know why groups of laughing Yulengor broke off their conversation when I happened to be passing, and turned to say: 'Poor fellow-tribal-father.' When I asked why they thought I was a 'poor fellow' they were momentarily nonplussed and I was still further embarrassed. Such a group would never laugh, even at a joke, if they saw an elderly or respected Yulengor passing. If they happen to be laughing or talking as an 'old' man approaches, they turn and say 'Kummajarrk', thereby conveying best wishes, goodwill, and sympathetic understanding, and implying that they think well of him and that their laughter is not at his expense. In similar circumstances,

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women would remark 'Kummajulni' ('Your chest is broad and your breasts well nourished'). 5?6 195

A man who accidentally injures another, perhaps by tripping or striking him with a spear or canoe paddle, abjectly apologizes by saying: 'Kummajarrk, ngara gorana.' He protests his goodwill, adding that he is ashamed or cast-down at his victim's discomfort, and except in the case of brothers and nearest relatives, he invariably gives a present as compensation. [431]

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LANGUAGES, SIGNS AND SMOKE-SIGNALS

From Cape Wilberforce to Arnhem Bay the ruggedness of the coastline is exceeded only by the precipitous bluffs of the English Company's Islands near by, and the whole area is known as 'Bwartaba' or 'rocky country', 'wartaba' being the name for rocks. Cape Grey is a prominent headland in the Gulf of Carpentaria and is called 'Bokorral', 'bokor' referring to the cliff-face and also to the human forehead.

Names for birds are sound-perfect imitations of bird calls. A crow is known by the raucous 'warrk', and native-companions making a noise resembling a low-toned gargle are called 'gorral-kor'. The brown pheasant calls pleasantly on several clipped notes and is known as 'bukbuk'.

Pithy sayings are in common use, and the best known have English equivalents. 'Mata-rang' is a man who never wanders far from his horde territory, or, when infrequently visiting distant friends, is for ever anxious to return home; literally he is a stick-in-the-mud. The term is also given to an adolescent who finds his mother's company preferable to that of boys of his own age and who follows her when she hunts for food.

If a man comes into a friendly camp and wishes to pass on important news, he waits for a lull in the conversation, and remarks cryptically: 'When the tide goes out, have a look on the beach and you will find something.' His hearers are instantly alert and make an opportunity for him to tell his story. There seem to be trouble-makers in every camp, with their accusations, rumours, and quarrels, and in exasperation they may be told to 'Get out and camp by yourself till the wind cleans your hair'.

Stone Age man has an extensive sign-language or semiology, and I accumulated a vocabulary of over two hundred simple signs for common customs, names, questions, instructions, and relationships. Sign-terms are generally imitations of the subject referred to; when making the sign

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spearing any wandering nomad they may have chanced upon.

Camp quarrels are fiery and frequent, and everyone joins in on the slightest provocation. An imaginary slight, perhaps a small irregularity in food distribution, or the frequently organized female attempts to annoy a bachelor by accusing him of making advances to married women, are enough to arouse resentment and inflame the emotions. Physical violence is usually preceded by a noisy battle of wit and the exchange of abuse. Over forty commonly used abusive epithets range from ingenious and witty references to male and female genital abnormalities to the calling into question of the integrity of parents, as well as that of future generations. It is also common to threaten to leave a man's bones to rot in the grave instead of removing them for decent burial in a burying post; the formal curse is: 'May your bones rot before they can be lifted for interment.'

Every possible, impossible, and imaginary physical irregularity, ranging from the ludicrous to the obscene, is applied to the genital organs of both sexes, and all the references are shouted in the open camp. A favourite obscene remark is that an opponent's eyes, ears, and mouth are filled with placenta; a short abusive term accuses a woman of harlotry and describes fantastic intimacies on her part, whilst a man can have similar cryptic charges hurled at him.

Milder references are made to big eyes, knees, elbows, and sunken eyes; bones are said to be solid and lifeless like stone, and eyes and ears are described as blunt. Minor scornful phrases used by mothers to children include the impatient exclamation: 'Your fingers are thumbs'; arms and legs are said to be awkwardly long, the neck to be short, the head to be sitting on the shoulders.

Despite his emotional temperament, Stone Age man has artificial methods of arousing a display of temper. If he feels that he has been slighted and wishes to vent his grievances,